

## NYS Integrated Pest Management Program to Lead \$.5M Vegetable Project in Three States

September 26th, 2001

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by John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: The New York State Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program has received a three-year grant for \$518,333 to develop reduced risk pest management strategies for cucurbits. The grant, which is funded by the USDA's Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program (RAMP), is a three-state cooperative project among New York, Ohio and Massachusetts, and is coordinated by Curt Petzoldt, assistant director of the IPM program.

"The goal of the project is to educate farmers, extension specialists, extension agents, and agribusiness people about the need to adopt sustainable integrated pest and crop management (IPM/ICM) techniques that focus on cucumbers, melons, pumpkins and squash," said Petzoldt. "The end result will be higher adoption of IPM/ICM production techniques by cucurbit growers in New York, Massachusetts, and Ohio that will translate into an improved economic bottom line for farmers and enhanced environmental quality for the citizens of those states."

The purpose of RAMP is to fund research education and extension projects of up to five years to develop reduced risk pest management strategies for agro-ecosystems or cropping systems. It is specifically geared to situations where current pest management practices make use of pesticides whose labels are threatened under the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA).



Suggested caption: Joe Kovach (left), Ohio State Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program coordinator, and Curt Petzoldt (right), assistant director of the NYS IPM Program, evaluate one of the cucurbit systems trials at the Vegetable Research Farm at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY. The two recently received a three-state grant for \$.5M from the USDA's Risk Avoidance and Mitigation Program. CREDIT: FHickey/NYSAES/Cornell

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Other major participants in the grant are John Mishanec, Eastern NY Vegetable IPM Specialist, Joe Kovach, Ohio State IPM Coordinator, and Ruth Hazzard, U-Mass Vegetable IPM/Extension Specialist. Kovach mentioned how fruitful his cooperation with Petzoldt has been, "Every proposal I write with Curt gets funded," he said. "It shows the national respect that Curt and the New York State IPM Program have. Cooperating with them on this project will certainly help the growers in Ohio move further along the IPM continuum."

The researchers will demonstrate and evaluate crop and pest management systems for cucurbits on growers' farms, as well as more controlled evaluations at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY. On organic, IPM, and conventional plots, they will compare economic profitability, environmental impact, and pest control efficacy. The researchers will also examine biological, chemical and physical soil characteristics for long-term differences among the systems. Over the past seven years, researchers in Geneva have performed similar studies with strawberries, cabbage, and corn.

"The project will help increase the efficient use of agricultural resources such as fertilizer and pesticides, integrate and emphasize natural and biological control methods, sustain the economic viability of farmers who adopt the recommended techniques, integrate weed, insect, and disease management options, and evaluate the effects on soil health of IPM and organic systems over time," said Petzoldt. "It will also provide pest management options for farmers to use in place of FQPA-threatened pesticides, and identify production systems that can produce high quality cucurbits, economically, with little environmental impact, and minimal pesticide residues."

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